



**Testimony of Kia F. Murrell
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Before the Judiciary Committee
Hartford, CT
March 9, 2012**

S.B. 31 AA Establishing A Commission On Judicial Compensation

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and other members of the Committee, my name is Kia Murrell and I am Associate Counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents more than 10,000 companies throughout the state of Connecticut, but most of our members are small businesses of 50 or fewer employees.

SB 31, An Act Establishing a Commission on Judicial Compensation allows the Commission to establish fair and balanced standards in determining what compensation is appropriate for Connecticut state judges. In doing this, the Commission must consider not only the daily job duties of judges, but also the larger impact that judges have on our state economy and quality of life.

CBIA member companies depend on the state court system in many facets of their business operations. Accordingly, our members need judges that are not only well-versed in the law, but also fairly compensated for the vital work that they do. If judges are not fairly compensated, Connecticut may experience significant attrition and a loss of judicial talent as has happened in other states and in the federal judiciary in the last decade. In January 2003, the National Commission on the Public Service (the "Volcker Commission") found "that the lag in judicial salaries has gone on too long, and the potential for the diminished quality in American jurisprudence is now too large." (Volcker Commission Report). The Volcker Commission recommended that Congress' "first priority...should be an immediate and substantial increase in judicial salaries."

SB 31 allows the Judicial Compensation Commission to enhance the efficacy of the state judicial branch and its standards for recruiting and retaining the best candidates by providing them with fair compensation. That is why we fully support it and encourage the Committee to adopt it.